

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /079 W  
-----034268 061808Z /45

R 061639Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7863  
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS  
AMIONSUL BELFAST  
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 10646

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY  
USOECD  
E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT UK  
SUBJ: THE GENERAL ELECTION: CONSERVATIVES PAPER THE  
CRACKS

SUMMARY: IN A BY-ELECTION SPEECH JULY 5, TED HEATH EXTENDED HIS SUPPORT TO THE TORY LEADERSHIP IN THE FORTHCOMING GENERAL ELECTION. AT THE SAME TIME HE DID NOT DISGUISE HIS CONTINUING DISCOMFORT WITH THE COURSE OF TORY POLICY. HEATH'S GESTURE, HOWEVER, ENHANCES THE IMAGE OF CONSERVATIVE PARTY UNITY AND OPENS TO SPECULATION THE QUESTION WHETHER HE WOULD BE INCLUDED IN A THATCHER CABINET. END SUMMARY.

1. PHRASES SUCH AS "RECONCILIATION", "THE OLIVE BRANCH", AND "CLOSING THE RANKS" HAVE BEEN MARSHALLED BY THE PRESS TO DESCRIBE TED HEATH'S SPEECH IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE LAST NIGHT. THE FORMER TORY LEADER, WHO IN THE PAST HAS DISTANCED HIMSELF FROM MOST OF THE POLICIES AND MANY OF THE PERSONALITIES IN THE THATCHER SHADOW CABINET, DE-  
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CLARED IN A PENISTONE BY-ELECTION MEETING: "(CONSERVATIVE SUPPORTERS) CAN BE ASSURED THAT I SHALL CONTINUE TO PLAY MY PART AND THAT THE CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO MY DETERMINATION TO INSTALL A CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT ONCE AGAIN IN OFFICE. I WISH MRS. THATCHER AND HER COLLEAGUES EVERY SUCCESS. TOGETHER WE MUST FIGHT HARD TO GAIN THE VICTORY WE ALL WANT." MRS. THATCHER, IN

A STATEMENT RELEASED LATER, SAID HEATH'S SPEECH "WILL GIVE ADDED STRENGTH TO THE CONSERVATIVE CAUSE IN THE BATTLES AHEAD. WE SHALL ALL BE WORKING TOGETHER FOR A DECISIVE CONSERVATIVE VICTORY."

2. COMMENT: AND SO IT SEEMS THAT THE PERSONAL RIFT BETWEEN MR. HEATH AND MRS. THATCHER HAS BEEN HEALED. WE ARE TOLD THE TWO WILL MEET SOON, WITH MAXIMUM PUBLICITY, TO DISCUSS ELECTION STRATEGY. SO, TOO, IT SEEMS THAT THE DISCONTENTED MODERATES OF THE TORY LEFT WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN TOGETHER WITH CONTENTED MEMBERS OF THE TORY RIGHT UNDER A SINGLE CAMPAIGN BANNER.

3. BUT WHILE IMPORTANT FOR ENHANCING THE IMAGE OF TORY PARTY UNITY, HEATH'S GESTURE IS PROBABLY LESS THAN MEETS THE EYE. HEATH CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN SUPPORT FOR A PARTY VICTORY AND SUPPORT FOR THE PARTY PROGRAM. REMARKS LATER IN HIS SPEECH IMPLIED DISAPPROVAL OF THE PRESENT DIRECTION OF CONSERVATIVE POLICY WHICH, HE BELIEVES, HAS WANDERED OFF THE PATH OF TRADITIONAL TORY LEADERSHIP: "TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS, THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY WILL NEED TO SHOW THAT IT IS BROADLY BASED AND THAT ITS SOLE CONCERN IS THE WELFARE OF ALL OUR FELLOW CITIZENS. THIS IS IN THE TRADITION OF THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENTS IN WHICH I HAVE SERVED UNDER CHURCHILL, EDEN, MACMILLAN AND HOME. IT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OVER  
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WHICH I PRESIDED AND IN WHICH MRS. THATCHER AND MANY OF THOSE NOW ON THE OPPOSITION FRONT BENCH WERE MINISTERS."

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R 061639Z JUL 78  
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AMCONSUL BELFAST  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 10646

FOR HER PART, MRS. THATCHER DID NOT RELEASE THE STATEMENT WELCOMING THE HEATH SPEECH UNTIL CERTAIN THAT HEATH HAD NOT UNDONE IN A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION WHAT HE HAD REPAIRED IN HIS ADDRESS.

4. HEATH'S SUPPORTERS IN THE PARTY FEEL HE HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO JOIN IN THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES WOULD HAVE BEEN POLITICALLY UNCONSCIONABLE AND INVITED THE SNIPING AND JEERING OF THE LABOR LEADERSHIP. HEATH'S OPPONENTS RESENT THE OLYMPIAN MANNER IN WHICH HE HAS BESTOWED APPROVAL ON MRS. THATCHER, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THEY RECOGNIZE IT IS SAFER TO HAVE HEATH INSIDE THE FOLD, HOWEVER HALFHEARTEDLY, THAN ROAMING ON HIS OWN OUTSIDE.

5. THE HEATH SPEECH INEVITABLY INVITES SPECULATION WHETHER MRS. THATCHER WOULD OFFER HIM A PLACE IN HER CABINET SHOULD THE CONSERVATIVES WIN. MUCH DEPENDS ON HOW HEATH ACTUALLY PERFORMS IN A CAMPAIGN -- WHETHER HIS ACTIVITIES WILL COMPLEMENT MRS. THATCHER'S OR RUN AN  
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INDEPENDENT COURSE, AND WHETHER HE CAN RESIST PUBLIC DIFFERENCES WITH THE TORY LEADERSHIP. IF THINGS GO WELL AND IF THE CONSERVATIVE VICTORY IS NOT OVERWHELMING, THEN MRS. THATCHER WOULD BE BOUND TO OFFER HIM A PORTFOLIO. IF HE REFUSED, HEATH WOULD AGAIN BE ACCUSED OF PETULANCE, BUT IT REMAINS HARD TO IMAGINE THE TWO PERSONALITIES WORKING CLOSELY IN THE CONFINES OF CABINET. ON ELECTION NIGHT, IF MRS. THATCHER WINS, WE ARE LIKELY TO SEE A TORY MINUET OF UTMOST DELICACY.

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